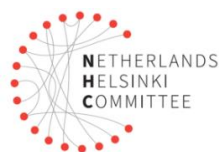




AFEW International's

COVID-19 situation report in the six countries of the Eastern Partnership

Prepared for the COVID-19 Solidarity Programme



This report has been written by Irina Orlova, for *AFEW International*

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Regional overview.....	4
Situation report Armenia	5
Situation report Azerbaijan	7
Situation report Belarus	9
Situation report Georgia	11
Situation report Republic of Moldova.....	13
Situation report Ukraine	15
Interesting reads.....	17

Introduction

In the framework of the EU COVID-19 Solidarity Programme for Eastern Partnership, *AFEW International*, People in Need (PIN) and Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) joined forces to propose a set of interventions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and contribute towards longer-term socio-economic resilience of vulnerable groups.

One of the activities in this project is the collection of information on the epidemiology of COVID-19, the measures taken by local governments to contain the epidemic and information on access to health services. This report doesn't give conclusions or recommendations for the next steps; the report functions as an information resource as support for the development of (new) interventions.

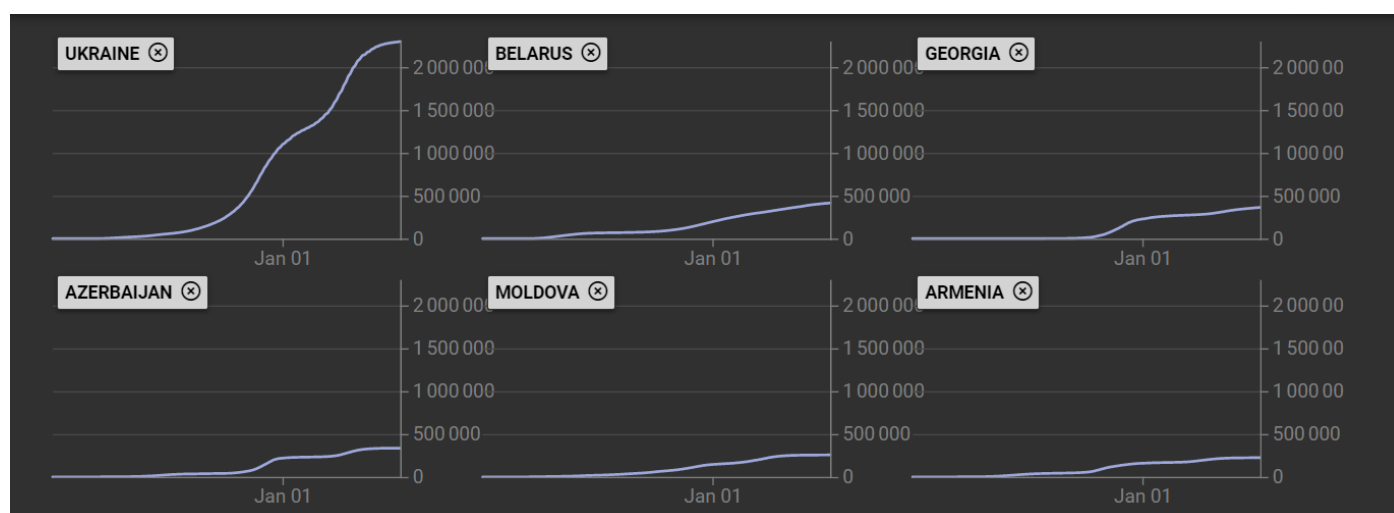
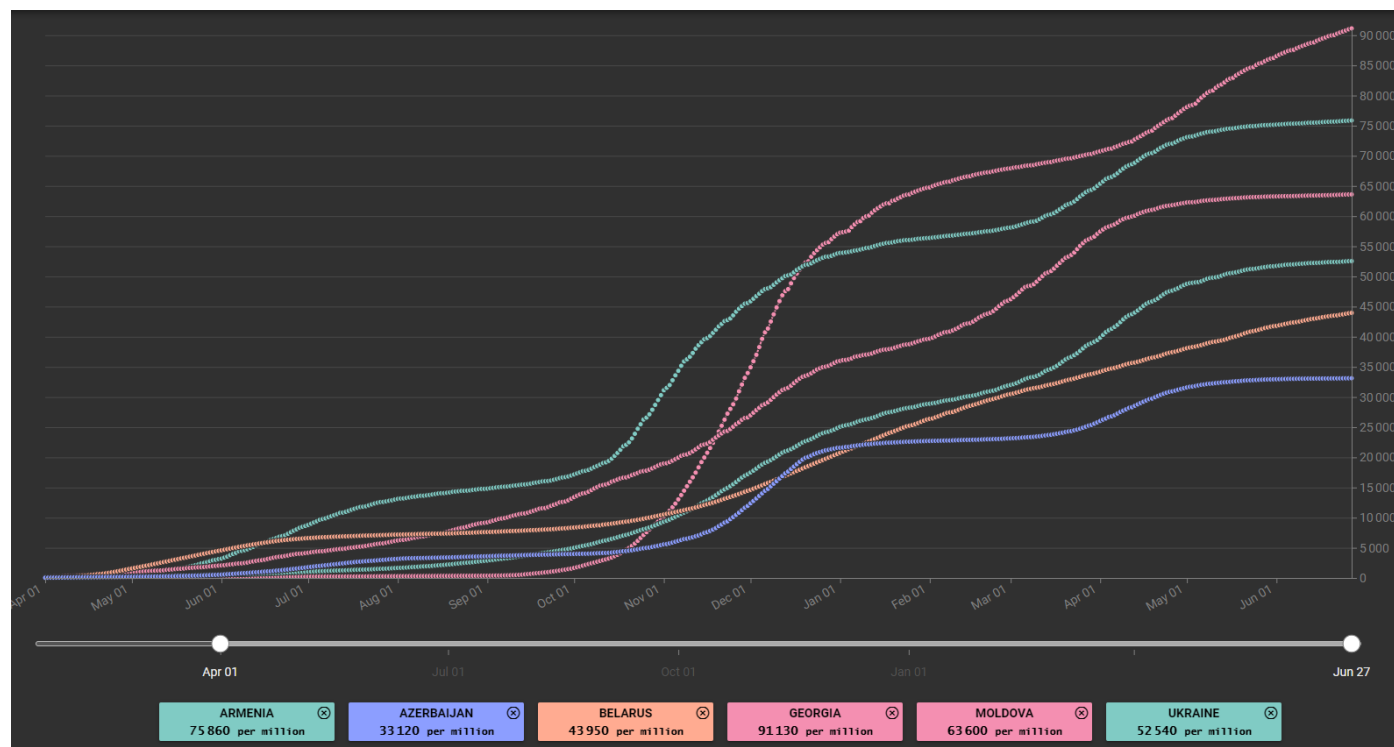
This report gives an overview of the period 1 April – 30 June 2021, the fourth quarter of the implementation period of the project. Such a report will be produced for every quarter of the project duration.

For this report the following sources are used:

- WHO Health System Response Monitor (HSRM);
- Official sources on the coronavirus situation in the countries;
- Reports on the COVID-19 situation prepared by the UNICEF, UN, OECD, International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR);
- Global news agencies;
- Local independent media.

Regional overview

Graph 1,2. Total confirmed COVID-19 cases per population ratio since the start of the active phase of the pandemic (April 1, 2020) in the countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) as of 28.06.2021¹



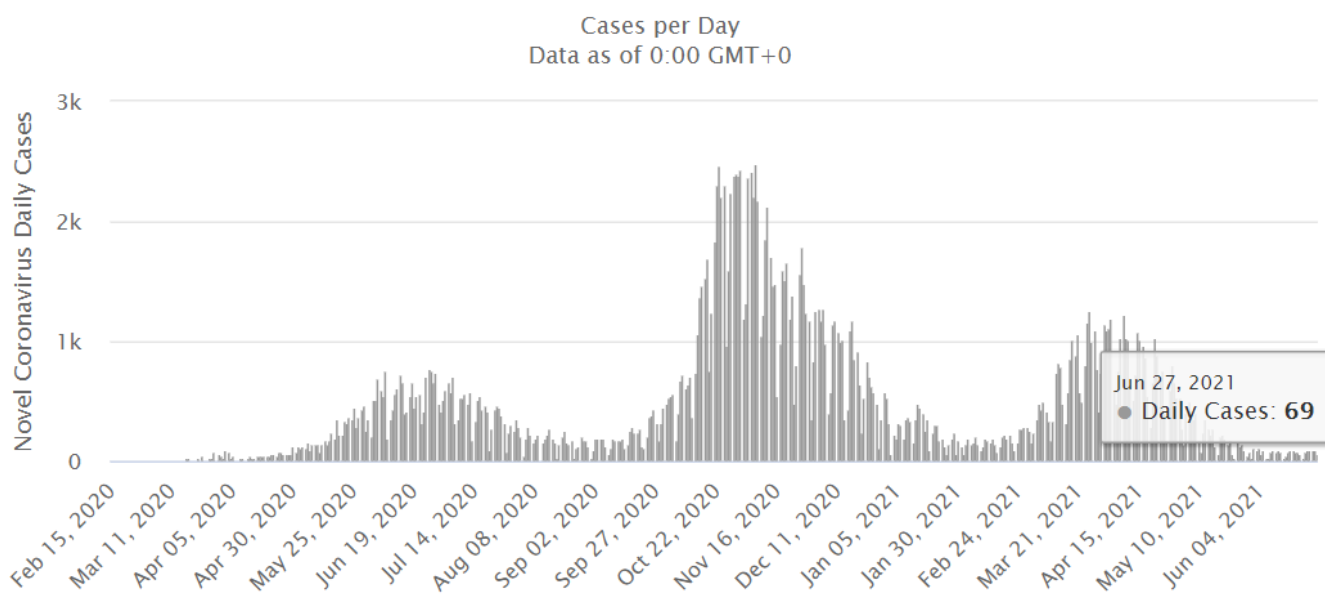
¹ Sciences Po Medialab Coronavirus Country Comparator. <https://boogheta.github.io/coronavirus-countries/> accessed 28-06-2021.
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Situation report Armenia

as of 28.06.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
224,851	216,645	4,510



Graph 3. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in Armenia²

Cases of COVID-19

— The coronavirus-related situation in Armenia is stable at the moment, however with negative projections, Deputy Director General of the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Gayane Sahakyan, said at a press conference on June 22, stating that rise in the virus reproduction number is being noticed.

— In the last 14 days, Armenia sees a raise in the reproduction rate. Over the past 7 days, this number has reached 1.1%. According to Deputy Director General, this figure shows that there will soon be an increase in new cases. “The increase is expected to be slow at the beginning, but then will be at a drastic rate. Specialists are expecting 600 new cases weekly. Usually, the 30% is being hospitalized, which means that we will have 180 cases seeking hospitalization”.

— The rate of vaccination has fallen from about 2,000 per day to 1,500 in recent weeks while 81 new infections reported on average each day in Armenia.

Measures to contain the epidemic

— The quarantine in Armenia declared on January 11 2021 is still in place till July 11 2021.

— Since June 1 masks are optional outdoors; on July 1, masks for vaccinated people will be optional indoors.

Vaccination

² Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/armenia/> accessed 28-06-2021.

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— As of June 27, 74,814 people were vaccinated against COVID-19, of which 58,618 received the first injection, the second - 16196, according to the Armenian Ministry of Health.

— AstraZeneca and CoronaVac are used to vaccinate persons aged 18 and over on a voluntary basis. Vaccination with Sputnik V is carried out for citizens over 18 years of age with chronic diseases, as well as for medical workers, employees and residents of social care centers from 18 to 54 years old.

Economy

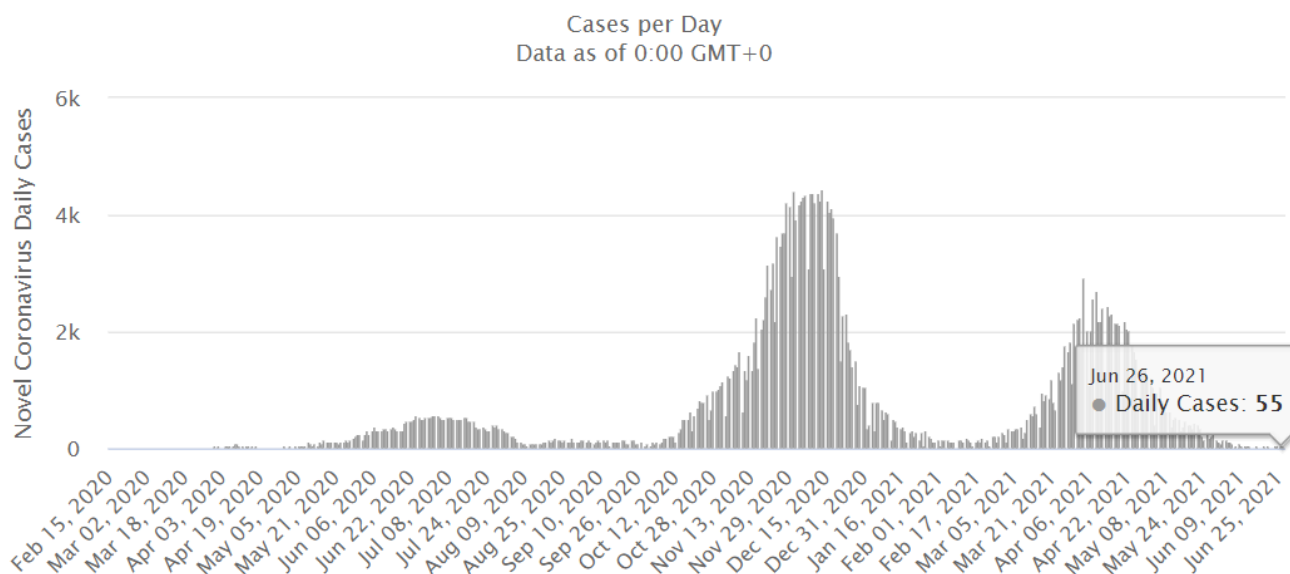
— The unemployment rate in Armenia increased to 24.2% in 2020, influenced by the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The IMF expects the unemployment trend to decrease slightly to 22.8% in 2021.

Situation report Azerbaijan

as of 28.06.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
335,836	330,084	4,968



Graph 4. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in Azerbaijan³

Cases of COVID-19

— COVID-19 infections are decreasing in Azerbaijan, with 49 new infections reported on average each day. That's 1% of the peak — the highest daily average reported on December 14.

Measures to contain the epidemic

— Azerbaijan has eased coronavirus restrictions on May 31. People are no longer required to wear face masks in public places, Baku Metro and inter-city travel have also resumed on May 31. The country made it mandatory in June 2020 to wear masks to stem the spread of COVID-19.

— Vaccine passport: As of June 10, Azerbaijan requires a vaccination passport for entry to gyms and recreational facilities such as pools, as well as mosques.

— From July 1, theaters, cinemas and concert will resume their work but the entrance to these establishments will also be available only to owners of Covid passports.

— 16 months after the introduction of a ban on public events amid the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic, Azerbaijan allowed holding weddings and other family events, however, the number of guests will be limited and they all guest

³ Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/azerbaijan> accessed 28-06-2021.

COVID-19 Solidarity Programme, COVID-19 situation report in the six countries of the Eastern Partnership

will be required to possess a Covid passport. The Cabinet of Ministers of Azerbaijan has allowed weddings and other mass celebrations from July 1, 2021, but with some serious reservations:

- The number of guests at weddings, engagement parties, birthdays, and other celebrations should not exceed 150 people.
- All guests over 18 attending the wedding are required to have a COVID passport.

— From July 1, 2021, at least 80% of workers in the service sector in Azerbaijan [must be vaccinated](#) with the first dose of the coronavirus vaccine or have an immunity certificate. The immunity certificate is issued to persons who have had a COVID-19 infection in the last six months. After the date indicated on the certificate, these persons must be vaccinated. The Covid passport itself does not have an “expiration date”. From August 1, 2021, at least 80% of employees of the service sector will be required to obtain a Covid passport.

[Vaccination](#)

— According to official data as of June 21, 2021, only 10.4% of the population in Azerbaijan [has been vaccinated](#) with both doses of the coronavirus vaccine. The first dose of the vaccine was received by 19.5% of the country’s citizens.

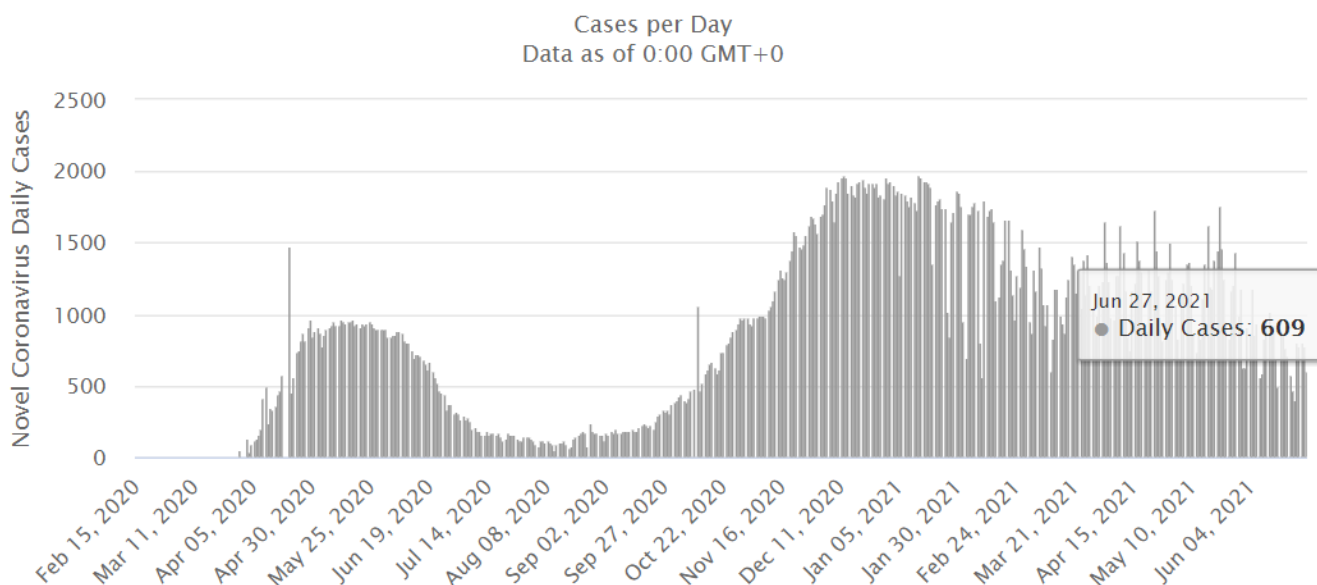
— Currently, four types of coronavirus vaccines [are available](#) in Azerbaijan. The Chinese-made CoronaVac (Sinovac) vaccine is massively used in all clinics in the country. Persons over 60 years of age can also receive the AstraZeneca vaccine. Anyone over 18 years of age can apply to private clinics for free vaccinations with Sputnik V and Pfizer.

Situation report Belarus

as of 28.06.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
415,339	408,307	3,113



Graph 5. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in Belarus⁴

Cases of COVID-19

— COVID-19 infections are decreasing in Belarus, with 662 new infections reported on average each day. That's 34% of the peak — the highest daily average reported on December 15.

Measures to contain the epidemic

— The Healthcare Ministry's anti-coronavirus recommendations remain the same – social distancing, limiting face-to-face contact, avoiding crowds, wearing masks.

Vaccination

— There is no need for compulsory vaccination against COVID-19 in Belarus, President Aleksandr Lukashenko said as he spoke with the personnel of Minsk Children's Clinical Hospital No.2 on June 19.

— As of June 28, Belarus has administered at least 1,068,413 doses of COVID vaccines so far. Assuming every person needs 2 doses, that's enough to have vaccinated about 5.6% of the country's population.

⁴ Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/belarus> accessed 28-06-2021.

— Sputnik Lite, another type of Russian vaccine against coronavirus is expected to arrive in Belarus in July. Belarus is planning to vaccinate students with this vaccine. In Russia, the Sputnik Lite vaccine enters civil circulation on June 25. The difference from the Sputnik V vaccine is that this version of the drug is administered once, and its efficacy is lower at 79.4%. Russian authorities view it as a suitable drug for the revaccination of citizens, and the Moscow government [plans](#) to vaccinate migrant workers with it.

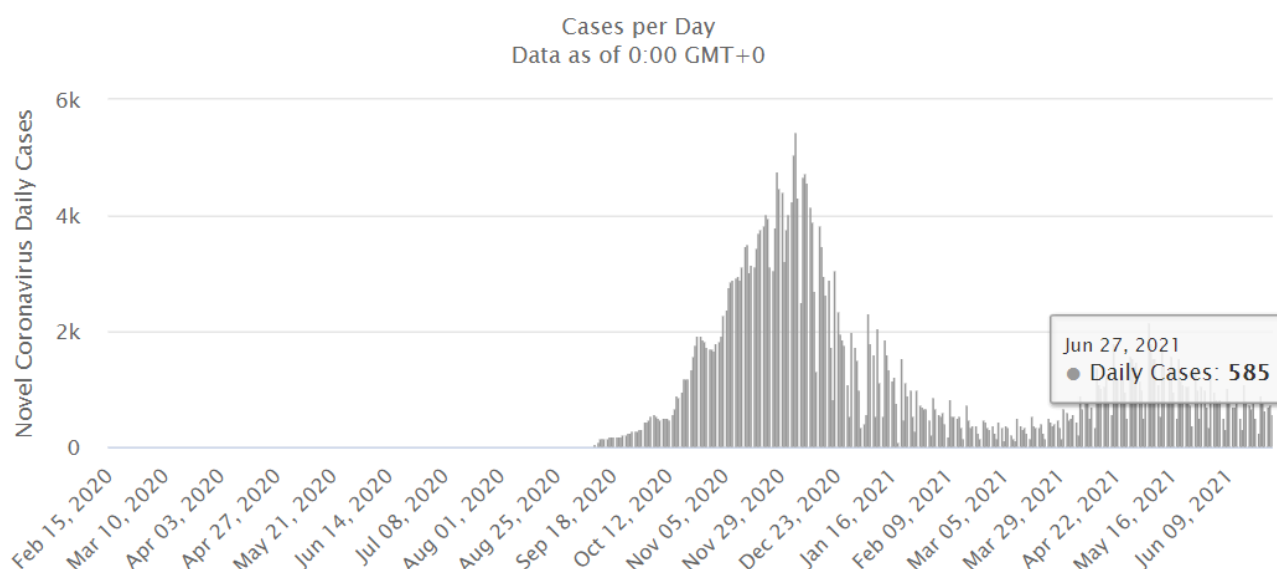
— Currently, two vaccines are available in Belarus: the Russian “Sputnik V” and the Chinese vaccine from Sinopharm.

Situation report Georgia

as of 28.06.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
363,874	350,466	5,275



Graph 6. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in Georgia⁵

Cases of COVID-19

— Georgia [is reporting](#) 663 new infections on average each day, 15% of the peak — the highest daily average reported on December 10.

— The data from the last month [indicates](#) an improvement in the epidemiological situation although it still remains difficult with hundreds of new coronavirus infections and more than ten deaths recorded every day.

Measures to contain the epidemic

— The curfew [has been in effect](#) in Georgia for more than six months. Until July 1, it will still be forbidden to move from 23:00 to 04:00 and the fine for breaking the rule is 2,000 lari [about \$ 800].

— The curfew in Georgia [will be lifted](#) starting from July 1.

— Since June 22, the requirement to wear masks on the street [is no longer in force](#). However, wearing a mask indoors and on public transport is still mandatory.

— Restrictions on cafes, restaurants and entertainment establishments [remain in force](#) – they can only work until 00:00.

⁵ Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/georgia> accessed 28-06-2021.

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— [According to](#) Amiran Gamkrelidze, director of the National Center for Disease Control, “The restrictions should help improve the epidemiological situation. But we must also enable the development of the economy and tourism. For my part, although there is no longer a requirement to wear a mask outdoors, I would still recommend wearing it”.

Vaccination

— Vaccination against coronavirus in Georgia [began](#) on March 15, 2021. By June 22, 238,220 people were vaccinated, of whom 84,756 received both doses.

— At the moment, four vaccines [are available](#) in Georgia: AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Sinovac and Sinopharm. However, there are problems with getting additional doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine. On June 22, all vaccinations scheduled for this day were cancelled, and registration is not yet opened for the following days.

— “Additional doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine were supposed to arrive in Georgia early in the morning of June 22, but there was a delay in delivery due to many factors. However, the problem will be solved soon, vaccination will be continued in the very near future”, [said](#) the head of the National Center for Disease Control.

— Deputy Minister of Health Tamar Gabunia [announced](#) that “all four vaccines (AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Sinovac and Sinopharm) will be delivered to Georgia in July in different quantities”, but did not give specific numbers or dates.

Economy

— The European Investment Bank [has allocated](#) €50 million to the government of Georgia for the procurement of vaccines against Covid-19 through the COVAX facility, as well as other medical equipment essential for the treatment of Covid-19 patients, announces the EU Delegation to Georgia. In 2020 alone, the EIB Group provided €210 million in loans and guarantees to support the resilience of Georgia’s healthcare system, and speed up the recovery of the national economy from the Covid-19 pandemic.

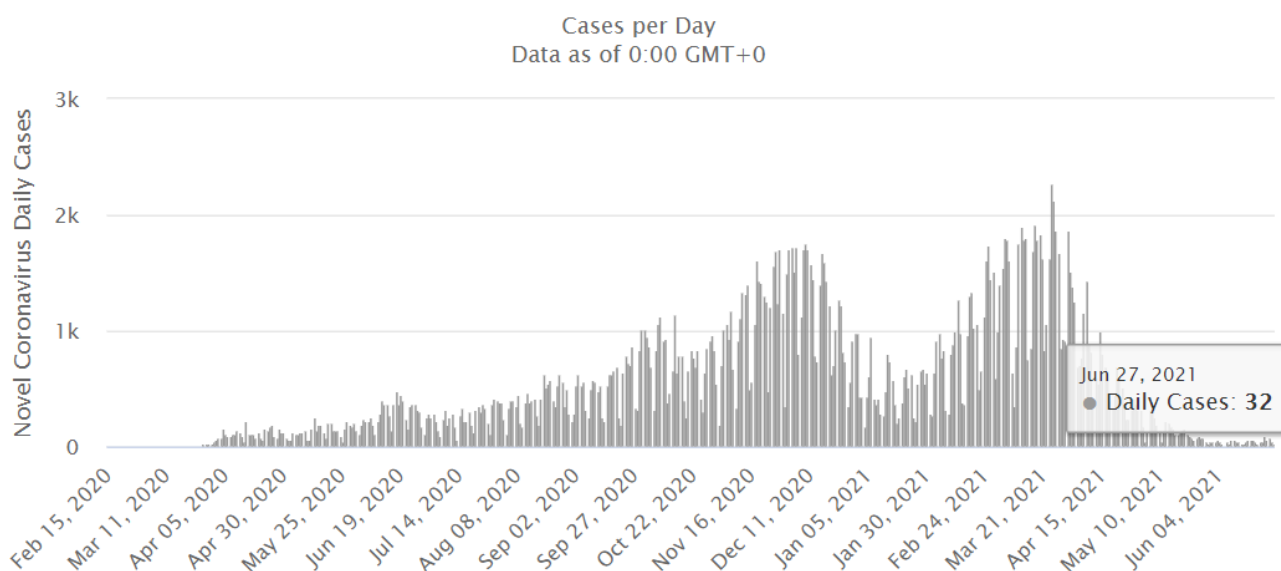
— On June 11, Georgian Finance Minister Lasha Khutsishvili has summed up the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Georgian economy. He said that the economic downturn during the Covid-19 pandemic has affected budget revenues, while healthcare spending has increased. The pandemic had a significant impact on the budget deficit and government debt. Tax deficit amounted to 1.9 billion GEL; health expenditures reached 0.9 billion GEL; 3 million GEL was spent on business support; social protection measures for our citizens' took 1.3 billion GEL. In total, the pandemic cost totaled 7.2 billion GEL to the budget for 2020-2021.

Situation report Republic of Moldova

as of 28.06.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
256,559	249,556	6,184



Graph 7. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in the Republic of Moldova⁶

Cases of COVID-19

— Moldova [is reporting](#) 15 infections per 100K people reported last 7 days and reporting 55 new infections on average each day, 3% of the peak — the highest daily average reported on March 28.

— On June 16 in Moldova, for the first time in almost a year, not a single fatal case from coronavirus [was registered](#). The Ministry of Health of Moldova noted that the number of deaths from coronavirus has decreased from 40 or more a day at the beginning of the year to 3-4 cases per day in the past few weeks.

Measures to contain the epidemic

— [The state of emergency](#) in the health sector is in effect in Moldova until August 15.

Vaccination

— Vaccination rates [dropped sharply](#) in Moldova in June. At the end of May, when the first vaccination marathons were held in Chisinau and Briceni, about 100 thousand people were vaccinated weekly, while the number of the first doses was more than three times higher than the number of the second. From 21 to 27 May, 77 thousand people were vaccinated with the first dose, 23 thousand with the second.

— In June, the situation changed dramatically: from June 1 to June 7, 62 thousand people [were vaccinated](#), of whom 26 thousand received the first dose, and 36 thousand - the second. From June 8 to June 14, 58 thousand people were

⁶ Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/moldova> accessed 28-06-2021.

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vaccinated, of which 19 thousand - the first dose, and 39 thousand - the second. The data from June 9 to 16 shows that during this period the first dose was only given to 21 thousand people, the second - about 63 thousand.

— [A "vaccination marathon" took place](#) in Moldova's capital, Chisinau, on June 26. Official sources say that more than 4,000 people got a COVID-19 shot at the event, which was organized by the Chisinau City Administration in cooperation with the Moldovan Health Ministry.

— As of June 28, 6,40 % of the population of Moldova [has been fully vaccinated](#).

— Currently, there are five vaccines [available](#) in Moldova: AstraZeneca, Sinopharm and Sinovac (both doses). Sputnik V and Pfizer remained only for those who received the first dose of these vaccines and are waiting for the second.

Economy

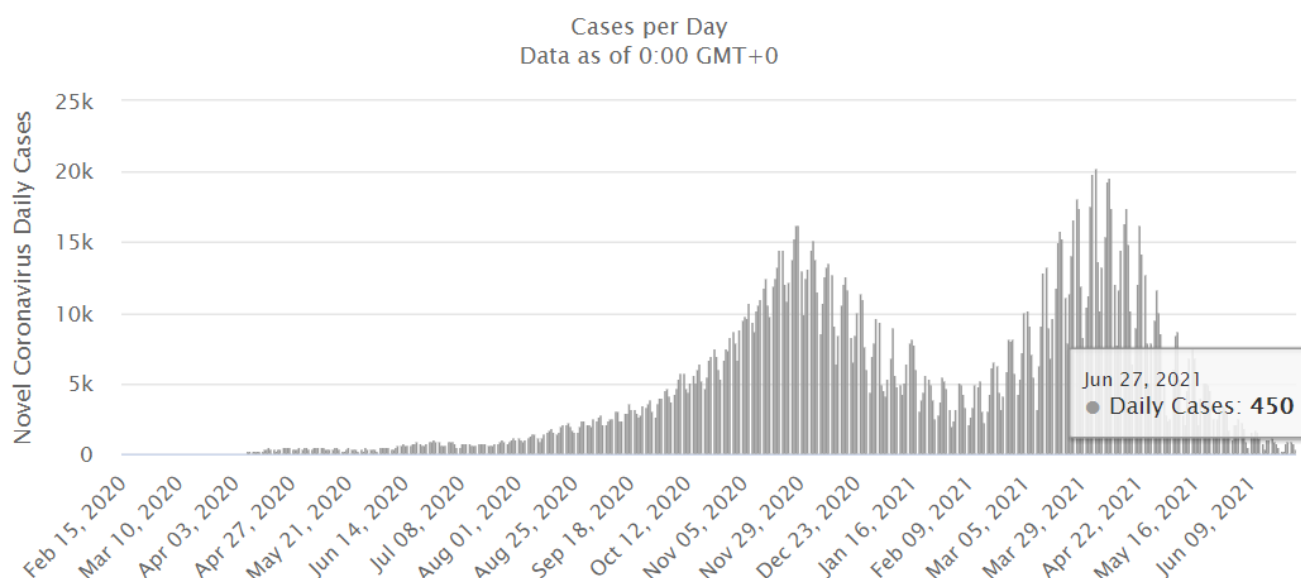
— The Moldovan economy [has gained](#) some momentum on the back of the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. Affected by the pandemic and a severe drought, economic activity plummeted in 2020, with GDP declining by 7 percent. On the supply side, the lockdown measures have halted trade and industrial production while a severe drought has impacted agriculture. Employment dropped to a five-year low. In 2021 the economy has started to rebound gradually, but most of the short-term indicators remain in negative territory.

Situation report Ukraine

as of 28.06.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
2,234,281	2,163,792	52,295



Graph 8. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in Ukraine⁷

Cases of COVID-19

— On June 28 2021, Ukraine [reported](#) nine deaths from COVID-19 over the past 24 hours, the lowest daily total since July 19 2020, health ministry data showed. The country has been seeing a sharp drop in new infections and earlier this month lifted many domestic restrictions while extending some until August 31. It also relaxed travel requirements for most destinations, but tightened border controls and obliged visitors from countries affected by the COVID-19 Delta variant to take a mandatory antigen test.

Measures to contain the epidemic

— On June 16, Ukraine's government [has extended](#) COVID-19 lockdown measures until August 31 but eased some of the restrictions. All Ukrainian regions are now in the "green zone".

— Ukraine [will not allow](#) foreigners inoculated with the Russian COVID-19 vaccine Sputnik into the country if they do not also provide a negative test for the coronavirus, the border service said on June 10.

Vaccination

— On June 17, Ukraine, which has maintained lockdown restrictions though the number of new COVID-19 infections has fallen, [has set a record](#) for the daily number of coronavirus inoculations. The ministry of Ukraine said 76,538 Ukrainians were vaccinated that day. That compared with the previous record of 73,376 shots on April 29.

⁷ Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/ukraine> accessed 28-06-2021.

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— As of June 22, 2,095,458 shots were given to people in Ukraine since the beginning of the vaccination campaign. In particular, 1,732,611 people [received their first dose](#) of the COVID-19 vaccine, 362,847 people completed the vaccination (received two doses). According to Minister of Health Viktor Liashko, 2.6 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines are currently available in Ukraine.

Economy

— On June 25, Ukraine [signed](#) a \$350 million loan agreement with the World Bank that aims to help the country to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and support economic recovery. The funds will be directed to the development of the economy amid the pandemic, to social support as well as to strengthen state institutions.

— The Ukrainian government [forecasts](#) about 4% growth in 2021 following the 4% decline in 2020 when lockdowns were imposed to fight the spread of the novel coronavirus.

— Earlier in June, Kyiv [lifted](#) almost all restrictions following a significant decrease in the daily number of new infections.

— But the central bank [says](#) the slow vaccination of Ukraine's 41 million population and the possibility of new restrictions pose a high risk to economic growth.

Interesting reads

1. Aljazeera: Coronavirus causes global rise in civil unrest: Report [read.](#)
2. UNICEF: Ukrainian medics lead way in COVID-19 vaccine campaign [read.](#)
3. Radio Free Europe: 'Damage Was Done': Belarus, Where Lukashenka Dismissed COVID-19, Now Struggles To Vaccinate [read.](#)
4. Axios: Eastern European countries fall way behind on vaccinations [read.](#)